The Number You Have Dialled Does Not Exist

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The Number You Have Dialled Does Not Exist

by amoralagent

Summary

The prompt that caused this is: Person A is bleeding out and will inevitably die soon and calls Person B to have a casual conversation as if nothing is wrong, making sure to tell them how much they love them before their time runs out. Someone seriously needs to help Will Graham this time. I am so, so sorry.

His fingers scrabbled and fumbled with the phone, almost slipping from his grasp, the pad of his thumb obscuring the screen with blood. He knew- *knew*- the guy kept a gun handy, knew it *before* he was shot, a lucky bullet tearing straight through the femoral artery. Why he didn't disarm him before plunging a knife into his jugular would be the bane of his existence; well, if it wasn't cut short in the meantime. It seemed inevitable at this point- with all the blood. God, there was blood *everywhere*.

He'd managed to limp across to the lounge area before his knees buckled, falling hard into the bookcase. Now slumped against it, having made a tourniquet from his tie, pressing his folded coat to his wound, surrounded by copies of some Jane Eyre novels and copious amounts of his own blood. Poetic, he thought.

A cold sweat began spreading up his spine, burning at his nape and alighting his skin. Through gritted teeth he complained to himself, something about *a waste of good meat*, a short, ugly grunt of a laugh crippling into a groan as he pulled the phone to his ear. The call was answered on the second ring, a rather concerned voice greeting him, "Will."

"Hannibal." He smiled, despite the excruciating pain and profusely bleeding bullet wound, he smiled because Hannibal said his name. It occurred to him, sharply, that he'd miss hearing that.

The man on the other end of the phone could sense the amusement, and Will could hear his smile after a pause, "For whom does this bell toll?"

"I was hoping to talk to the person I love most in the world, but I *guess* you'll have to do."

"As charmed as I am, mylimasis, I would hate to stand in the way of true love."

"*Oh.* You're right. My husband *is* the jealous type." Will quipped. He'd keep his quick wit to the end, it seems. His eyes burned.

Hannibal hummed in contemplation, "I'm sure if he heard you talking about him in such a way, he would take action."

"Something like that." It was increasingly difficult to keep the strain from his voice. Hannibal cleared his throat.

"I'm afraid this call is keeping me from my work. Unless there's anything you need?" Nothing short of steely indifference but Will could feel his grin.

"I see." He feigned surprised, lowering his voice, "What are you wearing?" That made Hannibal laugh then, only slightly. Will had the dire thought that he'd be happy to die hearing just that, finding the same peace in it as the sound of waves- he seemed to be the only thing able to cause it too. An honour, really.

"The same thing I was when you left. If you can recall, after so long." He sounded impatient.

"Missing me, huh?" His eyes began to blur when Hannibal made a noise similar to a grunt, pretending to be unconvinced, "What're you doing?"

Out of sight and earshot, Will knew Hannibal's smile widened, "Awaiting your return; you've been gone a while. I do hope our dinner guest hasn't declined the invitation." Will coughed past a pained noise, "And that he hasn't been too much trouble." He sniffed a laugh in response, *if only he knew he'd hit the nail on the head with that*.

"Yeah-- he's taken care of. He put up quite a fight--" His voice cracked minutely before he could finish. He had to move the phone from his face and bite his lip to stifle an oncoming cry, hearing Hannibal call his name through the speaker, taking a breath to calm himself, "Are the dogs okay?"

"They're safe and sound. Quiet, even. Still alive- at least, I think so." He heard a shuffle and a clink that he assumed was Hannibal nudging one of the sleeping creatures to check for signs of life, "Yes, they're okay. They miss you." Will hummed an answer, feeling tears now: "Are *you* okay, Will? Did you really call just to check on the dogs?" To be fair, he'd done that before.

"I just wanted to hear your voice."

Hannibal seemed to still, a tension arising in his tone, "Why? Is everything alright? Are you hurt?"

"Nothing I can't handle." His hand holding pressure to his leg shifted, warmth and red having seeped through to set into the lines of his palms. A dread converged in the pit of his stomach, dawning on him that he wouldn't go home again. To their home. His dogs would never know where he went.

If Hannibal were to see him he would be dead. And that would be among the few things in Hannibal Lecter's life that would break him.

He didn't dare think of it: if he did, he would fall apart.

Shock hadn't been given time to set in, fizzling out to a nauseating lightheadedness and the gentle consolation of a retreating agony, steadily turning to numbness. He heard a loud noise through the phone that sounded like a door slamming.

"Will?" He coughed again, tasting blood and bile at the back of his throat, "*Will?* Can you hear me?"

"Loud and clear." The clammy heat had stuck his curls to his forehead now, feeling the beads of sweat and tears as one, choking on sobs when he thought Hannibal couldn't hear. He began to shake, bordering on convulsing, "Where are you-- in the house?"

Hannibal sighed deeply, seemingly returning to how the conversation had began, the line crackling like radio static intermittently: "Where would you like me to be, Will?" Will smiled, breath laboured.

"I can *imagine* a few places."

Hannibal chuckled again then, "I'm sure you can; I would never doubt that."

"Have you ever..." Will definitely sounded like he was struggling now, just about managing to hear a rumbling on Hannibal's end, not quite pinpointing what it was, "Have you ever doubted me?"

Hannibal didn't miss a beat: "Never." The lightheaded feeling evolved into a drifting consciousness, as if being anaesthetised, registering a warmth blooming in his chest- completely unable to discern if it was his heart palpitating, stuttering, or a reaction to Hannibal's words. Then, "I certainly never doubted your ability to lie. Even to me."

Will scoffs, once, caught, swallowing thickly: "Death is an ugly truth."

"It doesn't have to be." To Will, Hannibal sounded sad, "Death can be a beautiful thing."

"Not this time." He laughed, or cried, either way it caught in his throat and erupted in a harsh exhale, dislodging the blood to land cloying on his tongue.

He didn't want to die. Fuck, he didn't want to die.

"Can you do something for me, mano meile?"

Will took a moment to reply, sighing, his grip on the phone faltering: "Anything."

"If you lose consciousness I can't promise you'll wake back up." His tone was medical and cold, tact, the inscrutable veil threatening to crack entirely, white-knuckling the steering wheel hard enough to crush it: "*Stay with me, Will*."

His breath became malformed until he could only wheeze, entirely devastated, blood beginning to dry into the fabric of the carpet. Will smirked, "No promises."

And dropped the phone.

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